

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMENDASSY SAIGON

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AMCONSUL NAHA

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AMCONSUL AUCKLAND

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AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, IN

SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES OF ASIAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION (ARO)

REF: STATE 16912

1. ACCORDING TO ICFTU ASIAN REGIONAL SECRETARY, V. S. MATHUR,
THE ARO IS CONCENTRATING ITS EFFORTS IN TWO AREAS: ORGANIZING
THE RURAL POOR AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION FOR YOUNG WORKERS.
DETAILS ON THESE PROJECTS WILL BE AIR POUCHED. THE

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FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY DESCRIPTION.

2. A PILOT PROJECT HAS BEEN LAUNCHED TO CREAE AN ORGANIZATION FOR THE "RURAL POOR" FROM TWENTY VILLAGES IN EASTERN UTTAR PRADESH. IN ADDITION TO THE ICFTU ARO, THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO SPONSOR THE PROJECT: THE INDIAN NATIONAL TRADE UNION CONGRESS (INTUC); THE HIND MAZDOOR SABHA (HMS); THE GANDHIAN INSTITUTE OF STUDIES--VARANASI; THE INDIAN DEVELOPMENT GROUP (IDG) --U.K.; THE APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT UNIT--VARANASI; THE PLANTATION WORKERS INTERNATIONAL (IFPAAW); THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION (ICA); AND THE INDIAN ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. THE PROJECT, WHICH ASSUMES THAT THE PROBLEMS OF THE RURAL POOR ARE SIMILAR THROUGHOUT ASIA, WILL ATTEMPT TO ORGANIZE LANDLESS LABORERS AND SMALL PLOT OWNERS FOR THREE BASIC PURPOSES: (Q) TO ENABLE THEM TO OBTAIN THE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ESSENTIAL TO THEIR ADVANCEMENT, (2) TO PERMIT THEM TO UNDERTAKE VARIOUS DVELOPMENT PROJECTS, AND (3) TO GIVE THEM A CAPACITY TO "PROTEST" IN THEIR OWN BEHALF.

3. THE INTUC NOW HAS A MANDATE FROM THE RULING CONGRESS PARTY TO ORGANIZE THE RURAL WORKERS AND HAS JUST CREAED A SPECIAL FEDERATION FOR THIS PURPOSE. THE ARO PROJECT WOULD APPEAR TO BE RESPONSIVE TO INTUC'S INEREST. HOWEVER, SINCE THE PROJECT HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEEN FORMALIZED, IT IS TOO EARLY TO LOOK FOR AN INTUC REACTION. THE SAME HOLDS FOR THE HMS, WHICH, WHILE IT HAS ORGANIZED PLANTATION WORKERS, HAS NOT YET ATTEMPTED TO ORGANIZE THE LANDLESS AND SMALL FARMER.

4. COMMENT: ANY ATTEMPT BY EITHER THE INTUC OR THE ARO TO ORGANIZE THE RURAL POOR WILL AROUSE THE STRONG OPPOSITION OF THE RURAL LANDOWNERS WHO HAVE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL INFLUENCE. BOTH INTUC PRESIDENT BHAGAVATI AND MATHUR ANTICIPATE THIS DIFFICULTY BUT ARE INTENT UPON WORKING IN THIS AREA.

5. THE PROJECT FOR THE CREATION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG WORKERS IN ORGANIZATIONATLY LESS ADVANCED THAN THE PROJECT FOR THE RURAL POOR. THE INTENTION IS TO DEVELOP WORKER-OWNED AND DIRECTED ENTERPRISES. THE FIRST SUCH ENTERPRISE IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PLANNED TO BE LOCATED IN BOMBAY, TO BE SPONSORED BY THE RMMS (INUC) WHICH IS THE MAJOR COTTON TEXTILE UNION IN BOMBAY.

6. FOLLOWING A RECOMMENDATION OF THE ASIAN TRADE UNION RESEARCH SEMINAR HELD IN SINGAPORE IN MAY 1974, THE ARO IS NOW DOLLECTING BASIC ECONOMIC DATA AND INFORMATION ABOUT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FROM ALL THE COUNTRIES WHERE IT HAS

AFFILIATES TO BE PUBLISHED IN A "YEAR BOOK."

7. IN ADDITION, THE ARO PUBLISHES A MONTHLY, "ASIAN LABOUR," AND THIS YEAR BEGAN PUBLISHING THE FORTNIGHTLY "ASIAN TRADE UNION INFORMATION SERVICE," A MIMEOGRAPHED NEWSLETTER REPORTING LABOR CONFLICTS AND DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRING IN ITS REGION.

8. COMMENT: THE IMPRESSION HERE IS THAT THE ARO HAS NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY ACTIVE IN THE PAST. HOWEVER, IT IS NOW EMBARKED ON TWO MAJOR PROJECTS WHICH SHOULD CAUSE ITS AFFILIATES AND OTHERS TO FOCUS ON THE ORGANIZATION. WE WILL BE REPORTING THEIR REACTIONS AS THEY ARE LEARNED.
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